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WASHINGTON.

“Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable.”

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 1, 1851.

The Birth of a New Year has ever been deemed a season of joyful congratulation, save by some of those ascetic philosophers who consider added years but a heavy-added grief and burdens to a load already insupportable. We profess no allegiance to a school so melancholy; and, though our bundle of years be confessedly somewhat onerous, we take leave to congratulate our readers and ourselves on the prospect, should life be spared, of adding one more to the number. To them may it bring whatever they most desire when their desires are the purest: to ourselves useful labor, contentment, and the happy reflection of having conducted a public journal in such a manner as to give our readers no cause to blush for that liberal patronage by which they have so long sustained it. The last is the fifth year since this paper was founded; a respectable longevity, certainly, for a political paper amid the storms of a free Republic, and under an unflinching maintenance of an unchanged and uncompromising political creed. We behold, indeed, wrecks on every hand; and find ourselves much in the position of one who stands in the midst of a cemetery, with the names of many a friend and many an early acquaintance written on the tombs around. That the *Intelligencer* yet survives—that it has seen one venerated proprietor gathered to his fathers, and has passed, unimpaired, into the possession of his successors, we attribute not to any special amount of talent in the conducting of it, certainly not to its unscrupulous allegiance to any political party, but simply to a uniform adherence to decency and to truth, and a candid admission of a tyranny, whether found in friend or foe. Many a thrilling tempest has whistled through its branches, and threatened, at times, to shake its roots; but, through the benignity of a protecting Providence, it yet enjoys a green old age, and a cheering amount of the sunshine of public favor; and when it falls, be this our consolation, that not a fragment of the tree has ever lent a torch to a political incendiary.

The present year closes the first half of the eventful nineteenth century; a portion of the world's duration distinguished by as many great and thrilling events as were ever crowded into the same space of time. The retrospect seems like some strange tumultuous dream, in which the scenes change with a rapidity and are filled with a succession of wonders unlike the sober realities of waking existence. Almost the entire first French Revolution, (as well as the second and the momentous third,) with the convulsions to which it gave rise in almost every kingdom of the civilized world, has fallen within this stirring period, in which Napoleon shoots athwart the sky, drawing after him a tail that fills the heavens, from the frozen sea to the pillars of Hercules. While, in our own hemisphere, the great political epoch of Mr. Jefferson's accession to the Presidency, the rise of the Jackson dynasty, the occurrence of two victorious wars, the disastrous deaths of two Chief Magistrates, the doubling of our territory; the more than doubling of our commerce, income, and population; and last, though scarce least, the rising from hell of the spirit of disunion, combine to mark the era as one of intensest interest to every friend of rational freedom, and the success of a temperate, regulated, and law-abiding Constitutional Republicanism.

Nor has the progress of science and discovery, in investigating the surface and the structure of our planet, enlarging the bounds of the solar system, annihilating space and time, and diminishing by more than half the burdens of human labor; above all, by applying the whole resources of advancing knowledge to augment the comfort, facilitate the tasks, and adorn the leisure of domestic life, been a whit less remarkable than the revolutions of empires and the struggles and the march of power. While last, and highest in the scale, the progress of education, the multiplication of schools, the improvements of the press, the diffusion of books, the civilization of savage and the enlightenment and mitigation of semi-barbarous society; the extensive translation and distribution of the Sacred Scriptures, and the progressive triumphs of its pure and humanizing truth, conspire to render the first half of the present century as pre-eminently the era of light and the dawn of a brighter day.

On the completion of such a period we may with just reason congratulate every reader. If such be the beginnings of the century, what may we not look for in its close? If such be the dawn, what will not be its meridian splendor? The prospect might almost make us wish to survive, that we might view the swelling scene. May we not congratulate our infant children that they have fallen on such an epoch for the commencement of their career? May they prove worthy of their age, live so as to illustrate it, and yield their latest breath amidst the brightness of its risen day!

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CONGRESS.

IN SENATE.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1850.

Mr. DOUGLAS. I have received a letter from John W. Lancaster, Pennsylvania, enclosing a memorial of an interesting character, which I have been requested to present, and move its reference to the proper committee. I am not, however, its author, but its committee, and will be glad to present it. The memorial states that he has devoted sixteen years of his life to the science of aeronautics; that during that period he has made about one hundred aerial voyages successfully and with safety. He states also that he has written a work upon this science, in which he has given a history of it and an account of the development of its principles, which has been received with great favor by the scientific world. He also states that he has demonstrated to his own satisfaction, and is prepared to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the world, his power to make this science useful and practicable for the transmission of mails and the transportation of passengers, and especially in the act of war, as well as in peace. He desires to discharge the duties of a constructive balloon 100 feet in diameter, which shall have the power of elevating 16 tons; that he is prepared to erect a balloon over the Capitol, or President's House, or Navy Yard, or any other point which may be designated, above the reach of gun-shot, and make a quicker voyage around the world with his balloon than in any other way; that his experiments have shown that at a certain elevation there is a current of air from West to East, in which he can sail with perfect safety, and with more expedition and velocity than by any other mode of conveyance. He desires the opportunity of testing this, and of satisfying the world of the truth of his claims. He says that he can make these experiments from St. Louis to New York and from New York to Europe for the sum of twenty thousand dollars. He thinks that this will enable him to fully demonstrate the practicability of this science, and its applicability to the purposes to which he proposes to devote it. He alludes to the fact that he is making large appropriations for objects of much less utility, and inasmuch as he has devoted his life to this business, he made so many successful voyages, has written a book demonstrating the practicability of this science, and only needs this small pittance to carry his scientific discoveries into practical effect, he says we ought to give him that amount to allow him to make the trial, and enable him to be the first man that ever sailed around the world in a balloon.

I present his memorial as he requests. I am assured that he is a man of great intelligence and scientific attainments. I have not the honor of knowing him, but these are the representations made to me by citizens of that State, who are not to any special amount of talent in the conducting of it, certainly not to its unscrupulous allegiance to any political party, but simply to a uniform adherence to decency and to truth, and a candid admission of a tyranny, whether found in friend or foe. Many a thrilling tempest has whistled through its branches, and threatened, at times, to shake its roots; but, through the benignity of a protecting Providence, it yet enjoys a green old age, and a cheering amount of the sunshine of public favor; and when it falls, be this our consolation, that not a fragment of the tree has ever lent a torch to a political incendiary.

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Mr. B. said the title to his bill was an index to its contents, and gave a general idea of its scope and object; but the subject being so important, and himself not of the committee, which it might be inferred, he desired it to be made more explicit, and to be more fully explained in the manner in which it was expected to accomplish its object. The first object of the bill was the payment of the public debt, and the second was the payment of the public debt, and the third was the payment of the public debt, and the fourth was the payment of the public debt, and the fifth was the payment of the public debt, and the sixth was the payment of the public debt, and the seventh was the payment of the public debt, and the eighth was the payment of the public debt, and the ninth was the payment of the public debt, and the tenth was the payment of the public debt, and the eleventh was the payment of the public debt, and the twelfth was the payment of the public debt, and the thirteenth was the payment of the public debt, and the fourteenth was the payment of the public debt, and the fifteenth was the payment of the public debt, and the sixteenth was the payment of the public debt, and the seventeenth was the payment of the public debt, and the eighteenth was the payment of the public debt, and the nineteenth was the payment of the 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